14

A SERMON

Preach'd at the Parish-Church of
St. *Lawrence*, LONDON,
To the Natives of
WILTSHIRE,
At Their
Yearly Feast.
November the 12*th*. 1695.

By JOHN RUSSEL, *Rector of* St. John *of* Wappin.

Hom. *Odyss. lib.* 9.

—οὐδὲν γλύκιον ἧς Πατρίδος οὐδὲ Τοκήων
Γίνεται.—

Nescio, quâ natale solum dulcedine, cunctos
Ducit, & immemores non sinit esse sui. Ovid. de Ponto.

LONDON,
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To all those *Honourable* and *Worthy Persons* Natives of the County of *Wilts*, who now Inhabit in and about the City of *London*, more particularly to

Mr. *Tho. Loving.*
Mr. *O. Corr.*
Mr. *Geo. Franklyn.*
Mr. *John Harris.*
Mr. *Fran. Jarvis.*
Mr. *Nat. Jarvis.*
Mr. *Hen. Hopkins.*
Mr. *John Noyes.*
Mr. *Rich. Ellis.*
Mr. *William Carpenter.*

Stewards of the *Wiltshire Feast* Kept at *Merchant-Taylors*-Hall, *November*, 12th. 1695.

SIRS,

FEasts *of* Love *and* Charity, *are near as old as* Christianity *it self, for, in the Primitive Age of our most Holy* Religion, *it was the frequent Practice of the Professors of it, to meet together in a* Religious Assembly; *not only for the* Performance *of* Publick Worship, *but also, as a Testimony of their mutual* Love *and* Charity, *to Eat and Drink together at a* Common Feast; *to the Furnishing of which, every One brought something, according to his Ability: And then they made also their* Collections *for the* Poor.

To this Practice St. Jude *has a Reference in his Epiſtle, where complaining of ſome, who, by their abominable Lives, were a* Scandal *to the Purity of the Chriſtian Profeſſion; he ſays* ver. 12. Theſe are Spots in your Feaſts of Charity. i. e. *Blemiſhes and Scandals to the* Chriſtian Feaſts, *which ought to be conſtituted of Gueſts of Purity and Irreproachable Lives. And St.* Paul *has a clearer Relation to this Matter, in his Reproof which he gives the* Corinthians *for their Irreverence, not only at the* Lord's Table, *but alſo for their Indecency, and Contumely at this* Chriſtian Feaſt, 1 *Epiſt.* Cor. 11 chap. 21, 22, *and* 33, 34 ver. *He there rebukes the Wealthier Chriſtians, for that they had not a due and charitable Regard for the Poor; but even at that* Feaſt *(whoſe End was* Charity, *and a Teſtification that they ſtood on a Level, in reſpect of their Allegiance to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Benefits they equally expected from Him, and ſo were Fellow-Subjects of One great King, the Lord of All, yet there) they regarded Temporal Riches, Worldly Reſpects and acted accordingly: And ſo the Rich who brought in Abundance, Eat and Drank accordingly, and the Poor who brought little, went away Diſſatisfied;* So that One was Hungry, Another was Drunken. *This Uncharitableneſs and Intemperance, the Apoſtle Reproves, and Exhorts to a Reformation in the* 33, *and* 34 ver. Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to Eat, tarry One for Another, *&c.*

I do acknowledge that at theſe Religious Feaſts, *they did alſo receive the* Holy Sacrament *of the* Lord's Supper; *but by reaſon of the Indecencies and Diſorders before mentioned, and the following Perſecutions which fell upon the Church, this was diſcontinued: But however the Juſt*

and

and Christian Practice of these Feasts, *neither can, nor ever will be discommended.*

This I mention, to justify your Feast, *and to shew that a* Feast *of* Love *and* Charity *(and such I hope yours is) is so far from being contrary to our* Christian Religion, *that its altogether agreeable to it, and concordant with the Practice of the Earliest Professors of our Holy* Faith.

But as Those ran into Irregularities in their Feasts, *which occasioned their Discontinuance, so may you; and therefore I shall observe, that* Publick Feasts *cannot have more than some of these Four Ends.*

First, *(which is the lowest, and most unworthy)* The End of satisfying the sensual Appetite in Eating and Drinking, *&c. But this is such an Indignity to the Place of our Nativity, as well as to the Holiness of our Christian Profession, that none of us (I hope) can become guilty of so unworthy a Design.*

Secondly, The End of Conversing together and Enlarging our Acquaintance, in order to advance our Temporal Interest. *And this (tho' it may by the* Prudence *and Sincerity of its Management, be honest enough, yet) if it be not subordinate to Nobler Ends, it's still unworthy of such an Honourable and Christian Concourse. And therefore,*

Thirdly, *A Third End is,* The Reviving good Neighbourhood, continuance of Country-Love, and mutual Affection; *which we are engag'd to, by our Religion, as we are Christians; and oblig'd to, by our Government, as we are Subjects of the* same *King; and farther as we are Natives of the* same *Kingdom; but more, as we are Neighbours of the* same *Country, Born in Bordering Parishes.*

riſhes, and Breathing the ſame *Sweet and Wholſome Air, and partaking of the* ſame *common Benefits of Nature. And this (tho not the higheſt, yet) is ſuch a juſt and Natural End, for the Encouragement of your* Feaſt, *that every One, that is a* Lover *of his Religion and Country, and that underſtands and feels the Obligations of Nature, muſt needs (agreeable to his Ability) give a ſuitable Encouragement to its juſt and regular Obſervation.*

Our Religion *obliges all the Profeſſors of it to* Love *One Another, to be Kind and Juſt, Charitable and Good-natur'd One to Another: This is an Obligation which the Author of it, our* Bleſſed Redeemer, *has laid upon us, and which every One, that will approve himſelf his Diſciple muſt Obey* Joh. 13, 34. A New Commandement I give unto you, that ye Love one another. *ſo* ver. 35. *and* chap. 15. 12. *And the ſame Apoſtle in his* Epiſtles, *inculcates nothing ſo frequent as the Duty of* Love, Little Children Love one another. *ſo St.* Paul 1 Theſ. 4. 9.

But as Chriſtianity is a Religious *Obligation to the ſincere performance of this Duty, ſo the Regard that we Owe to our Country, and the Government, which protects us is a natural One; And this is ſo ſtrong that a Man muſt put off Natural Affection, before he can break it. It's almoſt as Antient, and altogether as Wide and Univerſal as the World; for the Blackeſt* Negro, *the Tawnieſt* Indian, (*yea the Sottiſh* Soldanians) *are all poſſeſt with a moſt Warm* Paſſion *to their Native Country: To repeat Inſtances of this Aſſertion, and it's powerful Effects, would be to Tranſcribe a great part of all the Hiſtories of the World; and to go about to prove it to be Juſt and Honeſt, would be to ſpend time in Arguing that which no*

Body

Body contradicts. *But as* We *who are* English *Men, Love all* English *Men, with a Country Affection, as we are Subjects of the* same Prince, *and live under the Security of the* same *Laws*; *Yet the* Place *of our Birth, and the Vicinity of our Neighbouring Towns and* Parishes, *commands the choicer and warmer part of our National* Love; *and that this honest* Passion *may be increas'd and duly cherish'd, no means more proper than a* Christian Feast.

Fourthly, *But the most Noble End, is* To meet together to do Good, by Relieving the Necessitous, helping the Indigent, and turning our Eyes on the state of the Poor; To make Collections according to our Ability, for the Support of our Poor Country-men: *This is truly to constitute a* Feast *of* Love *and* Charity, When we deal our Bread to the Hungry, and cover the Naked, and hide not our selves from our own Flesh: *This as it's the most excellent End, so it ought to be the* Principal *in Design, of all those that come to those* Publick Entertainments. *We may easily encourage mutual Kindness, between Persons of equal Wealth and Fortunes in the World, since this is not discrepant to an Unregenerate and Sinful State, for* Publicans *and* Sinners *do the same*, Mat. 5.46. *But to give Testimonies of our* Christian Love, *by Acts of Bounty and Support to the* Poor *and Needy, as well as by our Regard to the Rich and Honourable, this is to prove our selves* Christians *indeed, and shews that we are influenc'd by a principle of* Love *that comes from above. And to do this, and to live with each other according to the Obligations of our Religion and Country, is that which is Recommended in the following Discourse, which you have entreated me to make* Publick. *And to what is said there, I shall add this Request*, That in every Passage

of

of Life, you'd remember your Country, and never be Guilty of any thing that may caſt a Blemiſh upon it. *That if the* Manes *of our honeſt Fore-Fathers have any Knowledge of, or concern for, the Deeds of their Poſterity, they may be ſatisfied in ſeeing that we do not degenerate from their Sincerity: But however that you'd ſo live, that* God, *(who we are ſure knows and takes notice of all our Actions, and will according to 'em judge us hereafter, that* He *) may be ſatisfy'd and pleas'd with us, that ſo hereafter it may be ſaid to us,* Well done good and faithful Servants.

To Conclude, As our Country produces a People of great Integrity, who are like the numerous Flocks of our Sheep (that feed on our Downs) Harmleſs and Innocent, and whoſe Language ought to be as plain as our Garb, as clear as our Air, and harmleſs like to our Shepherds Lives; I have therefore not endeavour'd, in this Diſcourſe, to ſpeak contrary to our honeſt Wiltſhire *Plaineſs: And perhaps the little, the* very little *Notice of a ſingle Day, to fit my ſelf for the Buſineſs of appearing before you, has ſo far aſſiſted to carry on our Character, that it helps to prove, that even in our* Sermons, *as well as all things elſe, we are Men of great Plaineſs, and I hope of as great Probity, tho' we want the Smooth* Language, *as well as the Refined* Arts *of the Court.*

I am ſure what I deliver'd was honeſtly intended, and that I know will help to make it acceptable to Honeſt You, *tho it be not allowed as an Apology to Others. That* God *may Bleſs our Country, and render it Illuſtrious by the Productions of excellent Men, and that* You *may help to make it ſo, is the Prayer of*

Your Humble Servant,

And Country-man,

J. Ruſſel.

Mutual Love and Charity,

Recommended in a *Sermon* Preach'd to the Natives of *Wiltſhire* at their *Feaſt*, *November* the 12*th.* 1695.

I PETER IV. *former part of the* 8 Verſe.

And above all things have fervent Charity among your ſelves.

KIndneſs and *Love* is ſurely the moſt Univerſal, as well as the moſt Noble Affection of the Creature; 'tis a Vertue which is altogether agreeable to Humanity; Howſoever ſome make the Condition of Mankind a ſtate of War: For tho' the Fall of Man, has clouded the Original Nobility of the Soul, yet ſtill there are plain Intimations of this Duty, left on the broken and ruin'd Face of Nature: ſo that he that conſults but the Dictates of his Reaſon, (though they are obſcur'd and blended with Ignorance) yet will find this not only to be his Duty, but alſo his Intereſt. It ſtill remains manifeſt not only from hence, but alſo from a Diſcovery of it even in the

better and kinder part of the Irrational Creatures, who have a Complacency and Delight in Converſation with thoſe of their own Species, and that makes 'em Flock and Herd together, (they are Eagles and Wolves that go alone, but Doves and Sheep go in Flocks and Flights) ſo that ſhould a Man fail of this Qualification, he muſt not only put off Humanity, but alſo ſink down to the loweſt Degree of Brutality, and put on the worſt part of the feral Nature.

To delight to do Good, and to be ſatisfy'd and pleas'd with the Proſperity of our Neighbours, to help forward (that which we call) their Good Fortune, and to endeavour to reſcue them out of Miſery, is to imitate God, who is beſt pleaſed in the Works of his Mercy, and moſt Delighted when he ſhews himſelf Gratious: And Man being the Image and Perfection of the material Creation, and being, by the Excellency of his Soul, qualifyed for *Love* and *mutual Kindneſs*; One may therefore expect to find this Vertue in him in the moſt exalted Degree and largeſt Meaſure: And he that dos not degenerate from the excellency of Humane Nature, he ſhews that this *Love* is Eſſential to him, that he is enfluenc'd by it, and he expreſſes it in all the Actions of his Life, and dos endeavour in every thing to walk agreeable to that, which he perceives ſo plainly to be his Duty, So that however the Knowledge and Senſe of our Piety toward God may be dim'd and ſully'd by Man's firſt Tranſgreſſion, yet this of *Love* and

Kindneſs

Kindneſs to our Neighbour, remains even in this our corrupt State ſufficiently clear, and can only be extinguiſht by offering Violence to Reaſon.

But now, as Religion is the Improvement of Reaſon, and the Rectification of our Nature, as it encourages whatever Remains of Vertue it finds in us, and labours to Plant whatſoever it finds wanting; ſo it teacheth nothing more clear and plain than this Duty of *Love*, of *Benevolence*, and *Charity* one to another: Hence our Bleſſed Saviour tells us that *to Love our Neighbours as our ſelves* is the ſecond great Commandment. And St. *Paul* comprehends the whole Law in this one Word *LOVE*, Rom. 13. 9. *For this thou ſhalt not commit Adultery, Thou ſhalt not Kill, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs, Thou ſhalt not covet; and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, Thou ſhalt Love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* Hence we have ſuch frequent *Memento's*, ſuch expreſs Injunctions, and repeated Precepts to this Duty; as if the Exerciſe of this Duty of *Love*, of *Charity*, was the *Whole* of what we had to do: Agreeable to this, ſaith St. *Paul* 1 Cor. 13. 13. *And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, theſe Three; but the greateſt of theſe is Charity.* And ſo, aecordingly, in his Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, he calls it *The Bond of Perfectneſs*; intimating that the Perfection of all Chriſtian Duties which we owe to One Another is bound np in the Bundle of *Charity*; or that ſingle Vertues are but ſcatter'd and looſe, as they are diſtinct, but are knit

Mat. 22. 39

Col. 3. 14.

knit together by the Concatenation of this Grace of *Charity*; ſo that this Grace being kept whole and entire all other Vertues would be preſerved in it, which would adorn us in Proſperity, and ſuccour us in Adverſity. And to this Purpoſe St. *Peter* warning the Chriſtian *Jews*, either of the End of the World, or (which ſeems more agreeable to the deſign of his Words) of the Conſummation of the *Jewiſh* State, and that Cup of Wrath which, without any Mixture or Allay of Mercy, was ſhortly to be poured forth on the City *Jeruſalem*, and the Crucifiers of our Lord; he admoniſheth them (ver. 7. *But the End of all things is at hand, be ye therefore Sober.*) to Temperance, Moderation, and Vigilancy, that they might be Prepar'd to eſcape the Diſtreſs which would ſurprize them with the reſt, if they were careleſs; and exhorts 'em (*Watch unto Prayer*) to be ſollicitous in Supplication to obtain a Security from Heaven, that they might not be ſwallow'd up in that overflowing Flood of Wrath which would drown the reſt in a total Deſtruction: And to to thoſe Admonitions he adds, Πρὸ πάντων, *Above all things* (Emphatically ſpoken) *have fervent* Love or *Charity among your ſelves*. As if this were of greater Conſequence, than the Duties of Sobrietys Watchfulneſs, and Prayer which he mentioned before.

By the way, I ſhall remark, That whatſoever Times God hath reſerv'd us for, *The Duty of Love and Charity, conſcientiouſly Practic'd, will not only render*

render us Acceptable to God, and easie to our selves; but by it also we shall gain the greatest Comfort One from Another.

And truly, since we are fallen into such a degenerate Age, that the Love of many is waxen Cold, not only to God, but also to their Neighbours; and that such a Selfish Spirit is broken loose amongst us, that it hath almost ruin'd our State and Nation. I therefore think no Doctrine more fit, no Instructions more Proper to be prest by the Ministers of our Holy Religion, than this of mutual *Love* and *Charity*.

And since we are here met together, to testify our continuance of this Christian Vertue, and also to encrease it; I hope the insisting on this Subject, will appear not unsuitable, but very Proper to our present Occasion.

I shall therefore consider,

1*st*. What the Grace of *Charity* is which the Apostle dos here Recommend.

2*dly*. Whence it proceeds: Or, what are the chiefest causes of its Production.

3*dly*. How this is to be Exercis'd towards all Men; but more particularly (according to the Text) among our selves.

4*thly*. I shall endeavour to apply it more Respectively to our present Purpose.

1. What the Grace of *Charity* is;

Of this I shall borrow the Definition from St. *Austin*, who tells us that *Charity* is, *Rectissima animi Affectio, quâ Deus diligitur propter se, & proximus propter*

ter

ter Deum. 'Tis the juſteſt and nobleſt Affection of the Soul, whereby we Love God for himſelf, *i. e.* on the Account of his own Infinite Excellencies, and we Love our Neighbour on the Account of God, as he's the Image of that Infinite Being. So that this is the Spring which gives Motion to all the Duties we owe either to our Creator or Fellow Creatures.

When we Love God, we cannot chooſe but readily Obey him, for *Love* will excite us to a moſt cheerful Obedience: When our Souls are warmed with this Holy Flame, we raiſe our ſelves to the higheſt Pitch of Faith, of Hope, and Aſſurance of Favour, and are alſo moſt affected with a true Humility.

Hence our Saviour, anſwering to the Lawyer's Queſtion, *Maſter which is the great Commandment in the Law?* Replies, *Thou ſhalt Love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind:* Intimating that this Duty of *Love* is the Fountain of Piety, the Root of Godlineſs, the Great and Comprehenſive Duty of Religion; containing in it, and giving Motion to, all the other Relative Duties which we owe unto God. And as he that Loves God, muſt alſo Love his Image and Similitude; So our Lord goes on in his Anſwer, The Second great Command is like unto the Firſt, *viz. Thou ſhalt Love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.*

Mar. 12. 30.

So that our *Charity* or *Love* (for the Word has here much what the ſame ſignification) muſt Burn,

Firſt

First, With the Pureſt and moſt Exalted Flame to God, it muſt warm us with an Holy Affection unto the moſt High, who, as he deſerves, ſo he commands our higheſt Eſteem.

Secondly, It muſt dilate it ſelf in Branches of *Love* towards our Neighbour. And indeed that Man can never (as he ought) Love his Neighbour, that dos not firſt Love God: For *Charity* is of an Heavenly Nature, and carries the Soul upwards towards God, moves it ſtrongly towards its Centre as its ultimate End; it's a Pure and Heavenly kind of Fire kindled in the Heart by the Pure and Holy Spirit of God; and whatever Flames we may have towards our Neighbours, if they are not of this Celeſtial Nature, they are but *Ignes Fatui*, but Sooty Vapours ariſing from beneath, and are *Earthly*, *Senſual*, *Diveliſh*.

And, if our Hearts Burn within us, with this Pure and Holy *Love* to God, we cannot chuſe but have a Friendly Warmth towards our Neighbour; for this will incline us to all the Relative Duties which we owe to one another; 'twill move our Hearts to Commiſeration, to Tenderneſs and Pitty; 'twill make us Courteous, and Pittiful, and to *Love as Brethren*; 'twill make us of a Sympathizing Spirit, and to be ready to *bear one anothers Burthens, and ſo endeavour to fulfil the Law of Chriſt*, which *Law* is *Love*; 'twill make us *Put on (as the Elect of God) Bowels of Mercy, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, ready to Forbear one another, and to Forgive one another.* In a Word 'twill

Coloſſ. 3. 12.

'twill make us conſcientiouſly Obey that Commandment which we have from Heaven, *That he*
1 Joh. 4. 21. *who loveth God muſt love his Brother alſo.*

And, ſince the nature of my Subject, and the preſent Occaſion principally direct to this, I ſhall chiefly apply my Diſcourſe to it, *viz*, To conſider that *Charity* which we ought to Exerciſe one towards another, or among our ſelves.

And this is that moſt Noble Vertue, which, if it were rightly underſtood, and ſincerely Practiſed, by all Men in general, in all the Affairs of Humane Life, it would make an Univerſal Reform in the World, and change the corrupt and foul Face of Things into an Heavenly kind of Beauty and peaceful Order. We ſhould hear no more Complaints in our Streets, the Fatigues and Violence of War would ceaſe from Abroad, and Litigous Suits and Unchriſtian Contentions would find their Period at Home: For this is that Affection which is the Begining of Friendſhip, 'tis the Bond of Peace, and the Spring of Juſtice, for I can never defraud or deal unjuſtly by him, towards whom my Heart burns with fervent *Charivity*. And therefore ſays St. *Auſtin*, *Ubi Charitas eſt, non poteſt eſſe injuſtia, dilectio enim Proximi malum non operatur.* If we Love our Neighbour we can never wrong him, for Charity worketh no ill to our Neighbour, ſince it rejoyceth not in Iniqui-
1 Cor. 13. 6 ty, but rejoyceth in the Truth: Where therefore
* R dicata eſt this isRooted in the Heart, there is a Rectitude and
Charitas? ſe- Honeſty of Life agreeable to it. (*)
cura eſto, nihil Malè procedere poteſt, St. *Auſt.*

This

This carries forth the Soul to a Delight and Complacency in our Neighbours and Fellow-Christians, or however, at leaſt, to all Acts of Benevolence of Good-will towards 'em; And therefore as various as the Circumſtances of our Lives, and the ſeveral Duties we owe to Mankind, ſo dos *Charity* form our Deportment, that in nothing we may be found Deficient or Negligent: Thus it teaches us the various Duties of *Loyalty* to our Prince, of *Obedience* to Magiſtrates, of *Piety* to our Parents, of *Reſpect* and *Deference* to our Superiors, of *Honeſty* and *Juſtice* to all that we are concern'd with in our ſeveral Callings, of *Love* and *Good-wiſhes* to every man in general, of *Compaſſion*, to the Miſerable, of *Mercy* to Offenders, and of that which we do more particularly call *Charity* to thoſe that are in Want: 'Tis in a Word (according to St. *Auſtin*) the Root of all Moral Vertues, *Radix omnium malorum eſt Cupiditas, & radix omnium bonorum eſt Charitas*: * As the Root of all Evil is Covetuouſneſs, ſo the Root of all Vertues is this of *Charity*; 'tis the Badge of our Religion, the *Shibboleth* and diſcriminating Character of a *Chriſtian*, a Teſtimony that the Life of God is wrought in us, and an earneſt of that everlaſting Glory, which we expect in Heaven hereafter.

*Et ſimul amba eſſe non poſſunt, quia niſi una evulſa fuerit, alia plantari non poteſt.

2*dly*. The Second thing is to conſider whence this Grace proceeds, and what are the Principal Springs of its Production.

The efficient cauſe of this Grace is God himſelf, who is the Fountain of all Vertue, and the Al-

mighty Husbandman that ſows the Seed of all divine Graces in the humane Soul, and He by his Holy Spirit, warms our Hearts, and enlightens our Minds, that we come to ſome Apprehenſions of his Excellencies, do ſee that he's Infinitely valuable and Lovely, and ſo we are drawn to Love him and make him our chiefeſt Good. And indeed it's the right Knowledge of God, that makes us Love him, and that blows up the Flame of Divine Holy Affection in our Hearts; for the more we come to know him, the more are our Souls carry'd forth in admiration of him, and Affection to him: And the Reaſon why Men Love him ſo little, is becauſe they know ſo little of Him.

* And when this divine Fire towards God is Kindled in the Heart, it ſoon flames out in all Acts of Kindneſs and Love towards our Neighbour; for, *He that loves God, whom he hath not ſeen, muſt needs love his Brother, whom he has ſeen.* So that the right Foundation of true *Charity* is layd in the *Love* of God,

* *Charitas ad cuncta virtutum facta dilatatur, quæ à duobus Præceptis incipit, ſed ſe ad innumera extendit Hujus Charitatis initium eſt dilectio Dei & Proximi, quia per amorem Dei, amor proximi gignitur & per amorem proximi, amor Dei nutritur; nam qui Deum amare negligit, profecto Proximum diligere neſcit.* St. Greg.

But then this (in the next Place) is carried on by inferior Cauſes, and cheriſhed by Rational Conſiderations, ſuch as,

1. *The Excellency and Conveniency of it.* This would make a kind of Heaven upon Earth, and put an End to all our Diſcords, that rent our Church and diſturb the State; this would calm and

and ſtill all our Murmurings and Repinings; And Abroad ſheath the Sword of War, and at Home beget and nouriſh Peace; 'twould, according to *Iſaiah*'s Prophecy, *Teach us to beat our Swords into Plough-ſhears, and our Spears into Pruning-hooks*; and turn all the Weapons of War into Materials of Peace, and make all the Inſtruments of Litigous Law, Null and Uſeleſs. Iſai. 2. 4

2. *From the Conſideration of its Reaſon and Juſtice*: Since if we deſire *Kindneſs* and *Love* from others, it's juſt that we ſhould give the ſame unto them; and this is ſo clear, that, tho' the Primitive Beauty of the Soul be very much ſullied by Ignorance and Paſſion, yet it remained manifeſt to the very Heathens, *Quod fieri tibi non vis, alteri ne feceris*; which exactly correſponds with our Saviour's Rule, *Whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, do ye ſo unto them.* And if therefore we would receive *good Turns* from others; if we deſire *Juſtice* and *Kindneſs* from our Superiors, *Good-will* and *Sincerity* from our Equals, and *Eſteem* and *Reſpect* from thoſe beneath us, we ſhall condemn our ſelves by our own Deſires, and make our own Expectations ariſe in Judgment againſt us, if we in like manner do not give all thoſe things, which we expect to receive. Mat. 7. 12.

3. A Conſideration of thoſe *mutual Bonds of Charity* which are laid on all Men in General, ſhould teach us *Charity* and *Benevolence* to each other, ſince we have all the ſame Rational Souls, and the ſame Shape and Faſhion of Body, and

the ſame common Principles of Nature and Reaſon; but more eſpecially we that are *Chriſtians*, when we conſider that we are all Subjects, of the ſame Prince (namely *Jeſus Chriſt*) are all under the ſame Covenant of *Grace*, and oblig'd by the ſame Precepts of Religion, are here in this World, in the ſame State of Tryal and Approbation, walking all in the ſame Way, like Strangers and Pilgrims bound for the ſame City, expoſed all to the ſame Temptations, and have all the ſame common Adverſary to oppoſe, and engag'd in the ſame Spiritual Warfare, are all alike Heirs of the ſame Hope, and Expectants of the ſame future Glory hereafter. Theſe Conſiderations ſhould lay ſtrong Obligations upon us of *Love* and *Charity*, of *mutual Forbearance*, *Mercy*, and *Kindneſs* towards each other; For how can we who hope to enjoy each other in Heaven, be Unkind and Ill-natred, Unjuſt, or Uncharitable, to one another here on Earth? If we believe that one part of our *Happineſs* hereafter in Heaven ſhall be the Eternal Fruition of the Company of Saints, of all thoſe Fellow-Chriſtians who are Members, with us, of the Church Militant here, (as ſurely it ſhall) How then can we be otherwiſe than *Juſt* and *Kind*, than *Benevolent* and *Charitable*, and of a *Sympathizing Spirit* towards our Fellows, who are Members with us of the Church here, and hope to be Partakers of the Church Triumphant there?

The want of this is a great Argument of our want of the Power of *Religion*, that the Efficacy of

of the Goſpel dos not influence our Lives, and that we have no more than the name of Chriſtianity, and its external Profeſſion, ſince where there is a *pure Heart*, a *good Conſcience*, and a *Faith unfeigned*, there is alſo *Charity*, which is the End of the Commandment. But,

3*dly*. I proceed to the Third Point, To conſider how this Grace is to be Exercis'd toward all, but more aſpecially (agreeable to the Text) *Among our ſelves*.

As to it's common Exerciſe, our Saviour tells us it muſt be Univerſal; it muſt be as large as the Univerſe in Intention, and deſire, tho' it cannot be in Practice: We muſt Love every thing that bears on it the Stamp of Humanity, and has the Image of God, in a Rational Soul; yea, the very Brutal part of the Creation muſt not be depriv'd of their Share of our *Charity*: *For a Righteous Man muſt be Merciful to his Beaſt*. Proy. 12. 10.

We muſt have a Charity for *Turks*, *Jews*, and *Heathens*; a Compaſſion for their Blindneſs, Ignorance, and Stubborneſs, which muſt excite us to help 'em by our Prayers, that our Common Father would diſcover the Knowledge of himſelf unto 'em in the Light of the Goſpel.

We muſt exerciſe this Grace towards even our Adverſaries, and learn from the Pattern and Precept of our Lord, *To Love our Enemies, to Bleſs them that Curſe us, do good to them that hate us, and Pray for them that diſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us*: And hereby ſhall we approve our ſelves to be the

Children

Children of our Father which is in Heaven. Our Kindneſs and Charity, like the Beams of the Sun, ought to warm and refreſh all about us, and *to riſe upon the Evil, as well as upon the Good*; and like Dews and refreſhing Showers, to water with our Benevolence, *both the Juſt, and the Unjuſt.*

But however, tho we are to be thus univerſally Charitable, and to engage our ſelves in a practice of general Benevolence; yet the Meaſures of our Love are not to be extended to all alike: as the Sun dos enlighten the whole World, yet he ſhines upon ſome parts with a ſtronger, and upon others with a fainter Ray: So that tho we are engag'd by our Sacred Religion to do Good to all; yet there are ſome Objects which are entituled to a greater ſhare of our Charity than others. 'Tis true our Lord commands us *to love our Neighbour* (and by that Word, ſeems to be intimated all Mankind) *as our ſelves**: But this (I take) relates to the *Sincerity*, and not to the *Meaſure* of the Affection: As a Man loves himſelf, without Hypocriſy or Diſſimulation, Truly and Sincerely; ſo alſo he ought to love his Neighbour. And thus he may love another as unfeignedly, tho not ſo fervently, as he loves himſelf: He may have as ſincere a Charity for an Allien, as for a Countryman, tho the Degree be not ſo great, nor the Meaſure ſo large: And this is agreeable to St. *Paul*'s Exhortation, *Gal.* 6. 10. *As we have Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, eſpecially unto them of the Houſhould of Faith.* Therefore there are Degrees of Love and Charity;

* *Dilige proximum ſicut te ipſum. Proximus in hoc loco non ſanguinis propinquitate, ſed rationis ſocietate penſandus eſt, in qua ſocii ſunt omnes homines.* St. Auſt.

Charity; and in the Order and Regulation of theſe we are to walk by theſe Rules.

Firſt, Of Religion.

Secondly, Of Diſcretion and common Prudence.

Thirdly, Of Nature.

1ſt. We are to walk by the Rule of Religion: And this will teach us to love good Men more than bad, and the obedient Subjects of Jeſus Chriſt, rather than thoſe that are in Rebellion againſt him. He that loves God above all, muſt neceſſarily (in the next place) have the greateſt Love, for him that's moſt like unto God, that excells in Holineſs, and goes beyond others in Virtue and Goodneſs, that comes nigheſt to that Pattern of Perfection which is ſet before us, *in being Perfect as our Father which is in Heaven is Perfect.* And Mat. 5. 48. therefore we ought to have a greater Degree of Love and Charity for a Chriſtian than a Heathen, for a Believer than an Infidel, and for one that by the Holineſs and Integrity of his Life, gives Proof of his Converſion, then for another, that by his Vices and neglect of Piety, gives Teſtimony of his being in a natural State. As that Perſon that's truly Loyal, muſt neceſſarily love a Fellow-Subject above a forreign Enemy; ſo he that's the Servant of Chriſt Jeſus, muſt needs have a greater Regard to one that's liſted under the ſame Banner, that Fights in the ſame Battle, and lives under the ſame Diſcipline with himſelf, than for an Unbelieving Jew or Heathen, or for a meer nominal and fugitive Chriſtian.

So

So that agreeable to St. *Paul*'s Rule, before men-
Gal. 6. 10. tioned, tho' we ought to do Good to all Men, yet we ought to have a more particular Regard to Good Men, and our *Charity* ought to expreſs it ſelf in the greateſt Vigour and Warmth to the *Houſehold of Faith*; towards thoſe we ought to have a *fervent Charity*, our Hearts ſhould burn with a more than a common Fire of *Love*, conſidering that they are a Kin unto us, there being a Spiritual Relation between us; for we are all *Brothers and Siſters in Chriſt*,

2*dly*. *The Second Rule, is that of Diſcretion and common Prudence:* Tho' we ought to have the higheſt *Love* and *Charity* for the moſt eminent Chriſtians, yet in the Exerciſe of this Duty, thoſe that are near us, thoſe that are round about us, that ſtand upon our Level, or to whom ſome Bonds of Nature do more ſtrictly oblige us; Theſe may claim the greateſt Meaſures of our *Kindneſs*.

The Miſeries of One, tho' not ſo Worthy in reſpect of Vertue and Piety, may yet call for greater Meaſures of our Bounty than Another that is far better, but dos not Labour under the ſame Difficulties. A Poor wretched *Turk* may (by reaſon of ſome circumſtances) be a greater Object of our *Pity*, *Mercy*, and *Charity*, than a believing *Chriſtian*. Thus our Saviour, tho he exerciſed his *Love* chiefly towards his Diſciples, yet ſometimes he convers'd and ſhew'd wonderful Teſtimonies of *Love* and *Commiſeration* to *Publicans* and *Sinners*. Times of *Affliction* and *Perſecution*

cution call for higher degrees of this *Grace*, than the Days of *Prosperity*; and our *Love* ought to be more intense to those that are beaten upon by such a Storm, than to those that sit in the Sun-shines and Calms of Peace; that by bearing one anothers Burthens, we may give Succour and Relief, and administer Consolation to those that are Afflicted. And because a dreadful time of Vengance was approaching on *Jerusalem*, therefore does St. *Peter*, here in this Chapter, more earnestly press this *Duty*, as that which ought to be warm in all times, but more *fervent* in Seasons of Distress. And therefore, tho we ought to be kind to All, yet *Prudence* will direct us to be chiefly kind to those that are in Affliction, and are expos'd to Adversity.

Prudence therefore is necessary to assist us in this, as well as in all inferior Graces; and he that's a *Good*, a *Charitable*, a *Kind*, and a *Merciful Man*, will also endeavour to be *Solomon's Wise Man, whose Heart discerneth both time and Judgment*. Eccl. 8. 5. But,

3*dly*. There's another Bond, that obligeth our *Charity* and Christian *Love*, and that's that of *Nature*: I mean the Obligations which some *Persons*, and some *Places* do naturally lay on us, more than Others: And these Bonds cannot, nor ought not to be violated, without great Injustice and Inhumanity.

Religion, tho it teacheth us to correct our Natures, yet it never gives Liberty to break its *Bounds*, or to put off those common, those natural Affecti-

ons which are planted in us; but rather (on the other ſide) blames thoſe that are *without natural Affection*, as Irreligious.

2 Tim. 3. 3.

Therefore our Kindred, (*according to the Fleſh*) our natural Relations, may juſtly claim a larger Share of our Love and Charity, than thoſe to whom we are not ſo nearly bound: And he that rejects theſe Obligations, and acts contrary to 'em, ſeems to endeavour to prove himſelf a *Terræ-Filius*, as if he thought himſelf the Child of an unknown Father; and he puts himſelf in *Iſhmael*'s Condition, *Whoſe Hand was againſt every Mans Hand, and every Mans Hand againſt his.*

Rom. 1. 3.

Gen. 16. 12.

He therefore that falls ſhort in this, in caſhiering the Bonds of common Love to *Kindred* by Nature, ſeems not only to have bid a Farewel to Religion, but alſo to Humanity: And is in this reſpect, (as St. *Paul* ſays, not very forreign to this Matter) *worſe than an Infidel.*

1 Tim. 5. 8.

But farther, there's not only an Obligation, in reſpect of *Perſons*, but alſo in reſpect of *Places*; The Country from whence wee took our Birth, the very Soil and Air which gave us our firſt Nouriſhment, deſerves our Eſteem and kindeſt Regard. And we find that this kind of Love has been Planted. and Cheriſhed in the Hearts of the nobleſt Perſons in the World, whoſe Memories *are continued to us by the power of Hiſtory*: *Sertorius* ſo lov'd his Country, That even in his greateſt Proſperity in Victories, ſtill he wiſh'd to be recall'd to *Rome*, and proteſted he had rather be the

the meaneſt Citizen of that City, than to live in Baniſhment, tho' he ſhould become the Emperour of the World *: Tho' *Joſeph* was rais'd from a poor Slave, to be the Prime Miniſter of State to the mighty *Pharoah* in the Land of *Egypt*, and tho' he had contracted Affinity with *Potiphar* Prince of *On*, by Marrying his Daughter; yet ſtill he retained a *Love* for the Land of *Canaan* his native Country; and therefore he commanded his Aſhes to be removed thither, whenever God ſhould deliver the Children of *Iſrael* out of that *Country*: And this St. *Paul* mentions among the Acts of his Faith, *Heb.* 11. 12. *By Faith* Joſeph *when he died, made mention of the departing of the Children of* Iſrael *out of* Egypt, *and gave Commandment concerning his Bones.*

* Plutarch. in vita Sertorii.

And if the very Country where we drew our firſt Breath merit our Eſteem, and lay a Claim to our *Charity*; ſurely much more do the People of the Country, who in this reſpect are as it were our Kinſmen, there being a ſort of Natural Relation contracted between us. However both of theſe have begot that ἔρως πατρίδος, that φιλοπατρία that *Love* to Men's Native Country that has been eſteemed, among the Antients, One of the moſt Noble and Heroick *Vertues*, and of which we have ſuch numerous Inſtances given in Hiſtory, and ſuch Egregious Sayings in the *Poets* and *Orators*.

I'll not inlarge by Repeating theſe, but from hence make an Application to our preſent purpoſe.

We are here met for the continuance and increaſe of this moſt Chriſtian Grace of *Charity* and *Brotherly Love*, of *Kindneſs* and *mutual Affection* one to another; or, in the Words of my Text, *Among our ſelves*. 'Tis a Duty we owe unto all, but more eſpecially to the Good; 'Tis a Duty we owe to Good-men, but more particularly to thoſe of our own Country, which is, in ſome Sence, a ſort of Family, which requires our Eſteem by Right of Birth and Breeding.

We are (my Country-men) the Natives of a County, inferior to none *for the Clemency of Heaven, and Kindneſs of the Earth*. The Goodneſs and and Salubrity of our Air ſpeaks for One, and our pleaſant Downs and Plains, our Fertile Fields and Fat Valleys anſwers for the Other. Our Country in the Production of Honeſt and Eminent Men, gives Place to none, exceeds many; 'tis our Reputation and Honour that we grew up like Plants in that excellent Field, which gave us our firſt Breath, and Infant Education. But let me here remark, That for a Perſon to boaſt of his Native Honour, and the Glory of his Country, and thoſe Advantages which Nature has given him, is Sinful as well as Fooliſh; unleſs he's ſo ſenſible of theſe things, as by them to be drawn to judge it beneath him to do any thing unworthy of it *: As *Menedemus*, the Philoſopher, replyed to *Antigonus* when he conſulted him, whether he ſhould go to a Riotous Banquet, *Remember* (ſays he) *that you are the Son of a King*. So let it be an

Πρὸς τὸν καυχώμενον ὡς ἀπὸ μεγάλης πόλεως εἴη ὁ τοῦτο, ἔφη Ἀριστοτέλης, σκοπεῖν; ἀλλ' ὅστις μεγάλης πατρίδος ἄξιος ἐστι. D. Laertius in vita Ariſt.

an Argument unto us when we are tempted to any diſhoneſt and diſhonourable Action, let us Remember that we are the Children, the Sons of the choiceſt and lovelieſt Part of the *Garden of the World*, (I mean *England*) and therefore let us do nothing Unworthy the Place of our Nativity, but, by our Virtuous Lives, prove that 'tis an excellent Place, that brings forth ſuch honeſt and excellent Perſons.

As Excellent Men are a *Reputation* and *Value* to the Place of their Birth; ſo it's alſo an Honour and Reputation to a Man to receive his Birth in an excellent Country. And this is not only familiar among Men to take notice of the Repute or Obſcurity of the Place of their Nativity; but alſo *God Himſelf* takes Notice of it, and notes down the Birth-Place of his Servants, as a Mark of its Honour,: Thus *Pſal.* 87. 4, 5, 6. *Behold* Phliſtia *and* Tyre, *with* Ethiopia: *This Man was born there. And of* Zion *it ſhall be ſaid*, This *and* That Man *was Born in her, and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall Eſtabliſh her. The Lord ſhall count when he writeth up the People, that* This Man *was Born there*, Selah.

Surely it will be an Honour to our Country, if we are Excellent Perſons, if we become Saints and the People of God, If we excell in Vertue, Piety, and every Thing that is Praiſe-worthy; that it ſhall be ſaid of *Wiltſhire* (in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Language) *This and that Man was Born there, and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall Eſtabliſh it*,

In

In order therefore, to keep up our Native Honour, let us esteem it as a Blemish to our Country, as well as to our Religion, to be guilty of vicious or uncharitable Actions. Let us give Proof of our Christianity by being *Kind* and *Benevolent* to all; but for the Honour and Reputation of our Native Soyl, let us, *above all things have fervent Charity among our selves.*

This is a Duty so Just and Reasonable, so much for our own Present, as well as for our Future Comfort, that we cannot deny it, if we are *Christians*, and are willing to keep up the Reputation of our Country: Were we call'd indeed to hazardous, and unheard-of Attempts,, for our Country's Honour, and our own Welfare, it might make us boggle, tho the Difficulties would by no Means excuse us. As were we call'd with the Roman * *Curtius* to precipitate our selves headlong into a devouring *Vortex*, for the Safety of our Country: Or, with the *Athenian* * *Codrus*, were we to offer our Throat to the Sword of the Enemy, and sacrifice our Life, for the Preservation of our Neighbours: Or were we but, with the Generous *Publicola*, to pull down our Houses, in order to satisfy the Jealous Humours of Suspicious Citizens. These, or such as These, were Matters that might make us Hesitate, Dispute, and Stumble at their Performance: But now, when we are requested only to be *Christians*, (which we Profess our selves to be) To be Men of Friendly, Kind, and Good natur'd Dispositions, and Merciful and Charitable Inclinations

* *Tit. Liv.* Hist. Lib. 7.

* *Justin.* Hist. Lib. 2.

tions; To put off *Wrath*, *Strife*, *Debate*, *Evil Speaking*, and all *Malice*; And to become, by our *Virtue* and *Piety*, Acceptable to *God*, Comfortable to our Selves, and an Honour to our Country. This, I hope, we may (being ſo Juſt, ſo Reaſonable, and Religious) be perſwaded to.

And if You are *(my Country-men)* willing to be ſuch, I am ſure, You will, at this Time, give Teſtimony of Your *Piety*, in practiſing the Duty, of which I have been Treating of, more particularly as it reſpects the Poor.

It's no ſhame to us, to acknowledge that we have Poor among us, For tho' the People of *Iſrael* were the Lord's own Choice, and tho' the Promiſes which were made them did chiefly conſiſt in Temporal things; yet the Lord tells 'em *Deut.* 15. 4. *That the* Poor *ſhould never ceaſe out of the Land.* which we cannot apprehend was for any other Cauſe, than that they might have Objects on which to exerciſe their *Compaſſion* and *Charity.*

And, in the laſt Place, that we ſhould chiefly have *Compaſſion* on thoſe of our own Country, we have the Direction of the Text, and alſo the Example of St. *Paul* who ſought Relief abroad, even as far as *Corinth* and *Galatia*, for the Poor Diſtreſſed Saints at *Jeruſalem*, who were his own Country-men.

It's too long, to urge the Apoſtles Words joyning to theſe of my Text, as a Motive to Charity; (*For Charity ſhall cover the multitude of Sins*, and *Uſe Hoſpitality one to another without Grudging*) I truſt

truſt your Willingneſs to the Duty will render it needleſs.

Our *Charity* and *Kindneſs*, I hope, will give Evidence to the Holineſs of our Lives, the Goodneſs of our Morals, and become an Ornament to the Place of our Birth: *And that we may thus Live, and thus approve our ſelves, the Almighty aſſiſt us, by his Holy Spirit, through* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord*, Amen.

FINIS.